1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

On the Atlantic slope, there are three tribes intimately allied Socially, 101
politically, and religiously, but differing markedly in language. The 131
Cabecars occupy the country from the frontiers of civilization to the western side of the Coen branch of the Tiliri or Sicsola River. Adjoining them, the Bri-bris occupy the east side of the Coen, all the regions of the Lari, Uren, and Zhorquin and the valley lying around the mouths of these streams. The Tiribris, now reduced to barely a hundred souls, live in two villages on the Tilorio or Changinola River. It is said that on the head waters of the Changina, a large fork of this latter stream, there are yet a few individuals of the Changina tribe, but the other Indians report them as implacably hostile and their very existence is only known by vague reports of their savage neighbors. The Shelaba tribe, formerly living on the lower part of the same river is now entirely extinct. A few half-breeds are all who perpetuate the blood, and their language is utterly lost. Still further down the coast, beyond the Costa Rican boundaries is another allied tribe, partly civilized, in so far as that they trade and work a little and drink a great deal of bad rum, spending most of their earnings on that bane of the race. They are called by foreigners Valientes. Crossing over to the Pacific slope, the Terrabas are tribally identical with the Tiribis. The tradition still exists in a vague form, that they are emigrants [173]
from the Atlantic side; but when or why the emigration took place, is forgotten. The home of the tribe is in a very narrow, rough cañon, traversed by a river that might better be called a torrent, a country strongly contrasted with the fertile plains and broad savannas of Terraba, and it is not improbable that under the press of a crowded population several migrations took place. They still tell how, twenty or thirty years [797]
ago, a priest came over from Terraba, baptized all who would submit to the rite, and by glowing stories of the abundance of meat and other inducements that he shrewdly imagined would tempt them, carried off over a dozen of their best men, who never returned. A glance at the vocabulary will show how little separated are these two branches of the tribe in language. The Borucas or Bruncas, who occupy a little village, not far from the headquarters of the Terrabas, are apparently the older occupants of the soil; perhaps crowded into a corner by the invaders.

Other tribal names are mentioned by various authors, such as Bicel- 101
tas, &c. The name Biceita is not known in the country, and, although used to the present day outside of the Indian country, is unknown to them, or at best, is supposed to be a Spanish word. The district of that name is probably the western part of Bri-bri, the most eastern point to which the slave-hunting expeditions from San José Cabecar penetrated. The Blancos are properly the Bri-bri tribe, but this word is rather loosely used, and is often applied alike to the Cabecars and Tiribis.

But little can be gathered of the history of these people. What hap- 173
pened in the times of their grandfathers is already ancient history and partly forgotten. All recollection of the first arrival of the Spaniards is now lost. They have no traditions of the use of stone implements before the introduction of metal. When asked what they did for axes before the traders

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

178 came among them, I could get no more satisfactory answer than that they went to Cartago to buy them. I have been told a vague story, however, that long ago there were two bands living in the country now occupied by the Bri-bris. Those living in the valley, around the junction of the branches of the Tiliri were more powerful than the mountaineers, and forced the latter to pay tribute when they descended to hunt, or cut the material for their bark-cloth clothing. But gradually the lowlanders died out; the highlanders, becoming the more powerful, rebelled against these impositions, and eventually emigrated in such numbers to the country of the former, that the distinction became lost by an amalgamation of the two parties. Even now the Bri-bris, who occupy the lowlands
[563] and most of the hill regions of the Sicsola, look down on their neighbors the Cabecars and treat them as inferiors. The Cabecars, on the other hand, tacitly acknowledge even a social supremacy, and in a mixed party submit to assume the more menial occupations, like bringing water and wood; and are always obliged to wait until the last when food or drink is being served. Few of the Bri-bris speak the Cabecar language, but there are few of the Cabecars who do not speak Bri-bri, and they usually
[622] use it in the presence of strangers. The Cabecars have no chief of their own, but are entirely under the rule of the Bri-bri chief, and have been, from time immemorial. Their subjugation is, in short, complete. At
[793] the same time they have the honor of religious supremacy, in so far as that the high priest, the "*Usekara*," whose office will be explained further on, belongs to their tribe. The ordinary priests, the "*Tsugurs*," who, like the "*Usekara*," are hereditary, come from a group of families on the Coen River, but belong to the Bri-bri tribe.

About the beginning of this century there was a bitter war between the
173 Bri-bris and the Tiribis. The youngest members of the war parties are
721 now mostly dead, and the few remaining survivors are very old men. The last of the warriors proper, mature men at that time, died about 1800, at an extremely advanced age. I have heard the traditions from both sides the question, and of course each party throws all the blame on the other. The Bri-bri story is that some people, a whole family, living on the extreme eastern portion of the Uren district, were found murdered, and no clue discovered to the perpetrators of the act. Not very long afterwards other murders occurred in an equally mysterious manner, which threw the whole country into a state of excitement. Afterwards a small party was attacked by some unknown Indians, a portion killed and some left to tell the tale. The tracks of the strangers were followed through the woods, always keeping to the east, until they were lost. Following this clue, the chief of the Bri-bris sent out a party of armed scouts, who climbed to the summit of the dividing ridge, overlooking the Tilorio. From here they discovered for the first time that they had neighbors; seeing their houses and cornfields in the distance. A large war party was fitted out; they passed the mountains, and without warning descended on the unsuspecting

l:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

enemy, killing large numbers. After this a desultory warfare was kept up; each party striving to take the other unawares, and to capture as many heads as possible. This went on until the Tiribi, reduced to a handful, sued for peace and submitted as a conquered people to the Bri-bris. Since then, the chief of the Bri-bris has always retained the right of final choice of chief of the Tiribis, after nomination of the candidate by his own people. Beyond this, no actual control has ever been exercised. The Tiribi story does not differ from the above, except in the origin. It throws the blame of the first aggression on the Bri-bris. In some respects the Tiribis are superior to the Bri-bris. The children are more respectful to their parents; the women are more modest in dress and behavior, and the men are more industrious. This is their boast, and while they look down on the Bri-bris, the latter despise them as a conquered people. Very little communication occurs between the two tribes, and I could learn of but two cases of intermarriage between them.

I have already said the Tiribis and Cabecars are under the political rule of the Bri-bris. The form of government is extremely simple. One family holds the hereditary right of chieftainship, and up to 1873 the reigning chief had theoretically full powers of government. The succession is not in direct line, but on the death of the incumbent, the most eligible member of the royal family is selected to fill the vacancy. Often a son is passed over in favor of a second cousin of the last chief. The present chief is first cousin of his predecessor, who was nephew of his predecessor, who was in turn a cousin to his.

Formerly the chiefs held only a nominal control over their people. The principal advantages derived from the position were rather of a social than a political nature. The chief was conducted to the best hammock for a seat on entering a house. He was treated to their great luxury, chocolate, when persons of less note were fain to be content with chicha. But in case of a quarrel the chief had to defend himself from the blows of the long, heavy fighting-stick like any ordinary mortal. Within the last decade or two, the traders, by throwing their influence on the side of the chief, have caused him to be treated with more respect, and endowed him with the attributes of a judge over his people, in all ordinary disputes. About 1870 or 1871, Santiago, the then chief, paid a visit to Cartago and San José; was well treated, and received an appointment from the Government, for the position which he already held, with the full approval of his tribe. It had been customary for the heir-apparent, the future successor, to hold a position as second, or subordinate chief, with little or no authority. One Lapiz was at that time second chief, and claimed that he was more entitled than the other to the chieftainship. Exaggerated ideas of great mineral wealth in "Talamanca" have been long held in Costa Rica and the Commandant of Moen, a little settlement on the Atlantic coast, used principally as a penal station, conspired with Lapiz against Santiago. This individual, named Marchena, advised Lapiz to assassinate his chief, and thereby place himself at the head of the tribe.

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

412 shaped only by use. Cacao and maize are
[252] ground upon the surface of the metate with a muller or mano, which is another, though smaller, natural waterworn bowlder.

On abandoned sites near Teliri river some crude three-legged stone metates were found (figs. 9, *a*, *b*, drawn from fragments), pecked from hard scoria. These are inferior to the beautiful "tiger" metates of Las
● [173] Mercedes; nevertheless, some of the Bribri believe that these fine metates were used by their ancestors. The Mercedes and Anita Grande sites also yielded some of the plain, three-legged metates, as well as those of the more ornate variety.

411 *Digging Stick or Warclub.*—Pl. XVII, *a*,
412 represents a digging stick of narrow, paddle shape, made of "cacique" wood. While the natives said that this specimen was once used as an agricultural implement, some of them also declared that it had been employed as a warclub. They referred to the stick as a "macana," in which is recognized an implement equivalent to the Nahuatl *macuahuitl*, a warclub in which blades or spikes of obsidian were embedded.

101 The two Bribri groups are to be found at
361 Cabagra [48] and Salitre (*žerí*) and amount to
[162] approximately 895 people. Cabagra lies near the pass to the upper Lari beside a river bearing its name which is an important tributary of the Diquís. It is about four leagues from Potrero Grande. The exact date of the arrival
[174] of Bribri here is not known although it was probably at the end of the 19th century as many of the older inhabitants were born on the Lari and Urén rivers. One tradition holds
● 173 that certain families fled across the Talamanca
166 Range because they had not adhered to clan
[614] regulations in marriage. It is perhaps of significance that very few clans form the groups in both places, and that as people, they are the first to divert from ancient tribal customs. Another popular belief is that Berchi, a king of Talamanca, caused numerous people to flee because of his extreme cruelty (*see* Folklore: *Recent History*). Some inhabitants of Cabagra moved westward to Salitre. Gradually, both places have grown as a result of the arrival of other families from the northeast as well as an increased birth rate.

At the end of the pass from the upper Coen is Ujarrás of the Cabécares which was settled for a similar reason at the same general time.
[582] It is said that "the King of Talamanca prohibited marriage between brothers [44] and one couple who had disobeyed the rules fled and went to Ujarrás." Others followed to the ex-
[Text continues top of P. 8(B)--Qualys]

LANGUAGE

197 **Connections and Previous Studies.** The majority of linguists connect both the Bribri and the Cabécar tongues with Chibcha.[48] However, they are sufficiently removed from one another that they are not mutually interchangeable. The intellectually more advanced, but at
[191] the same time conquered, Cabécares generally understand and speak Bribri with exception of
[Text continues bottom of P. 8(B)]--Qualys]

[103] [48] This name has no meaning in any existing tongue.
[797] The site should not be confused with N.S. de la Luz de Cabagra which was founded in 1745 by the Franciscan fathers and settled with Térraba Indians two leagues from San Francisco de Térraba. Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, p. 504.

[44] It should be remembered that these people are organized on the basis of matrilineal clans. (*See* Social

173 tent that this small valley could not support
166 the inhabitants. Some left for the site of China Kichá and there were joined by more people from Talamanca. We estimate that there are
[162] about 700 Indians within the area of Ujarrás and China Kichá.

101 Other Sites. There is a relatively strong per-
144 centage of Talamancan blood remaining in the people of the Reventazón Valley, but there are none of the Talamancan living habits left. Here at Orosi, and farther north at Cachí and Tucurrique, are descendents of the Cabécares
C48 from the Coen region. Tres Rios, in the Central
167 Plateau, was originally settled by Bribri and
101 Cabécar Indians brought there by the colonial government in 1747.[45] Similarly, at Cangel in Guanacaste, there are some few Bribri relationships.[46] The presence of this blood in these
[669] areas is due to the transferral of many Talamancans by the government of Costa Rica as penalty for four uprisings, the first three between 1610 and 1619 and the last in 1709, which resulted in the destruction of the Fran-
[799] ciscan missions and the massacre of Spanish
[177] men and women.[47] In these sections of displaced peoples, acculturation has been triumphant and there is next to nothing to suggest the aboriginal connections of the inhabitants of these places beyond the ordinary characteristics of the mestizo.

LANGUAGE

197 the Chirripó who are not neighbors and have
[191] little or no contact with Bribri. Few Bribri, however, do the same with Cabécar. In this respect, nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the vocabulary used by the Bribri when dealing with sacred subjects, prayers, or myths
[533] is almost totally Cabécar. Ancient songs, on
[784] the other hand, are often sung by the Bribri

Organization.)

[45] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, pp. 491–92.

[46] Fernández, 1889, pp. 379–80.

[47] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, pp. 325–26, ftn. 7; 1886; vol. V, pp. 162–215.

[48] Lehmann, 1920, vol. I, pp. 178–356; Mason, 1940, pp. 76–77.

755 787 [776] The stones are also consulted for curing and for prophesying the result. When one of the *sią* is confronted with a question concerning the life or death of a person it contacts *sibu* who sends *duLar*, his messenger, with the answer. *duLar* is very special, however. No one, not even the greatest medicine man, has ever seen him. He confers with the stone and disappears when the doctor talks to it. Some medicine men say that they have heard his presence in the sense that in the dead of night, when waiting for an answer, there is sometimes a sound as that of a small chick.

784 [776] [783] **Tabus.** *bukLú* is a bad spirit or spirits (*see* Theological Beliefs). It also denotes uncleanliness and is analogous to tabu[149] in both Cabécar and Bribri and is of utmost importance. If one leaves his house alone it becomes *bukLú* and if it is his bad luck to return ill, then it is very dangerous. The only way to remedy this among the Cabécar is to go all around the house, touching it with a stick, and then to do the same to everything inside. The Bribri do this with their hand. The ceremony is called *itiuk* (to wake up) in Bribri and *kniok* (to frighten) in Cabécar.

[881] [841] [843] [783] [752] [825] [779] The first menstrual period is particularly *bukLú* (*see* Puberty) although no woman is ever free from tabu during this condition. A pregnant woman is supposedly possessed by this evil which requires a medicine man to cure or cleanse after birth. If by malfortune she should be bitten even by a harmless snake, the *bukLú* in her compel her to die.

Vestiges of an elaborate totemic organiza-
[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 47(B)-Analyst]

FOLKLORE

● 173 726 **Recent History—Wars.** A fine line is drawn between legend and actual history. Events are reflected in both. In 1959, the medicine men of the Cabécares still recount their version of war with the Térrabas or Terribís which took place at the beginning of the 19th century.[150] The following is an Indian account of this event.
[TEXT CONTINUES BOTTOM OF P.47(B)-Analyst]

[149] Gabb, 1875, p. 499; Pittier, 1938, pp. 21–22; Skinner, 1920, pp. 102–105.

[150] *See* Gabb, 1875, pp. 488–89. Although Gabb does not mention the Cabécares in this war, it should be

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Cabécar
Bribri
Terraba

784 825 [779] [224] tion are still evident in many tabus pertaining to animals. Among the Cabécares, all animals have a plant name which is used when a hunt is planned. One does not say that he is going to hunt a given creature. He announces that he is going to look for yuca or *tiquízque*, as the case might be. This is to deceive the pro-
[776] tector or *dueño* of the animal so that the game will not be warned. Each sickness is associated
753 825 with a distinct animal and is believed to be sent by *ditegLa*, lord of illness. The toad is
[774] associated with a sickness that causes pain in the stomach, loss of weight, coughing, and then death. The first women in the world had
[756] this illness. A medicine man passed the toad
784 over them as a cure. It is bad to touch a toad.
825 The *duriwak* clan of the Bribri cannot touch
614 toads nor possums. In fact, the Buriers (*see* Death) are the only persons who can touch
262 buzzards or possums. They are allowed to kill
[767] the latter. The *kor'wak* clan of the now extinct
[775] *korrehué* or Singers could not eat nor touch tapir because it was the reincarnation of their ancestors. The *sənɨtswa* and *múnúLiwa* not only cannot eat this today, but the *múnúLiwa* must even change their direction if they see tapir tracks. Bribri women and children can only eat this meat if it has first been smoked and then cooked by an old woman. Macaw meat is tabu to women and to men belonging to the Bribri clans of *duriwak*, *saLwak*, *kor'wak*, *kúmbuwak*, *sulariwak*, *and ruLgikwak*. Before other men can consume it, macaw has to be prepared in a special pot and the partakers have to wash their hands.

FOLKLORE

The War between the Cabécares and Terribís

(*Cabécar*)

●173 726 *sibu* left *sibuLetá*, the green mountain, in Cabécar. It was the time when people wore only loincloths of *mastate*. Many Terribís (Térrabas) suddenly appeared to kill the

remembered that these people were under the dominance of the Bribri, and according to Cabécar tradition definitely took part and suffered in these raids as the version cited denotes.

[P. 48 (A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
Cabécar
Terraba
Changuena

173 726 [727] Cabécares, and only a very few managed to escape. The Terribís cut off heads,[181] cleaned them, and used them for cups. They cooked the heads and dried them well and then put them in certain houses.

The king of the Cabécares was furious. He gathered together people and went to Terribí where they killed some of their enemies. But still the Cabécares were frightened and many hid. The *usegLa* always remained at a great distance. One day, nevertheless, an *usegLa* was taken captive with other Cabécares and killed. The Terribís cut off ten heads but kept alive [727] as prisoner a young girl who was niece of the *usegLa*. They tied and carried her, and she cried and cried. All this time the heads made an awful noise, which was more frightening as they still had their teeth. The *usegLa's* head took the lead and told the Terribís that the Cabécares would come and reap vengeance.

After a three days' journey, they reached the dwellings of the Terribís. The skull of the uncle continued to make noise, the teeth chattering horribly. In desperation, the Terribís tied the skull on a rope and hung it in a house. One night, however, the rope broke and the skull slipped out.

The people in the house thought some child had fallen when they heard a noise. They ran to look outside. There, on a barren hill, was a great jaguar who grabbed the Terribís one by one. The beast went from house to house until he had carried everybody away except the girl who remained crying. Then it was that *sibu* interfered and told the jaguar not to kill all the Terribís because he wanted some left. The jaguar had to obey.

In the early morning, the creature returned to the spot and said to the girl, "Don't be afraid even if I am dead and look like a jaguar. I am your uncle and I will take you home. I'll carry you across the rivers and over the mountains, but I'll leave you beside your house. As I am dead, I cannot enter. Just don't be afraid."

[172] [181] Trophy heads are common in Costa Rican archæology.

[648] [189] The Changuinas were allies of the British against the Spanish, the Cabécares on the Pacific side of the range, and the Borucas. Their home territory was along the Changuinola River in northwestern Panama. The British gave them scissors, knives, axes, beads, etc., and sent them across the cordillera to the

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P.48(B)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
Cabécar, Changuena
Bribri
Terraba
173
726

He slept near her and told her that if she saw a large jaguar or a large alligator in a pool, it would be him. Knowing that some *usegLa* had fled in the forest, the uncle further advised her to search for her relatives.

It happened as the uncle said, and the girl told all about it later.

Vengeance for the Cabécares

(*Cabécar*)

During the same war, the Terribís climbed trees to look for the Cabécares and Bribri. They would spot a *palenque* (house) and then sleep near it so as to make a surprise raid and kill everyone in the early morning. One day the Terribís went to the upper Estrella River without seeing a soul as all the people along the way had fled. Twenty-five Terribís paused on a hilltop and spotted a large *palenque*. They surrounded the dwelling and some guarded the roads to see where the people were.

Time passed. They heard the cocks crow but they didn't see a single person. This made them think that all the people were within the house. *Palenques* only have one door, so the whole twenty-five entered along with a large wasp which killed them all.

Thus it happened that when another Terribí, who had stayed behind to gather rope for hanging the heads the band expected to collect, tried to find his companions he failed. The truth was that there had never been a *palenque* at that spot on the upper Estrella, nor were there roads. It was part of a scheme of *sibu* against the Terribís. It was he who had sent the wasp to avenge the Cabécares.

The War of the Changuinas [152] with the Talamancas

(*Cabécar*)

The war between the Changuinas and the Cabécares was fought for such a long time that

[648] Changuina River, a tributary of the Diquís or Río Grande de Térraba. Here they had a tremendous battle with the Borucas and Cabécares of Ujarrás as the graveyards in the vicinity testify. *See* Stone, 1958, p. 45, fig. 1. Today, legend holds that the Changuinas are still at the upper reaches of this tributary, but that they disappear when one arrives.

[P. 49(A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19 Changuena Cabécar Bribri

173 726 the medicine men of Ujarrás went to Talamanca to look for the best medicine man there.[153] He was known by the name of "He who taught medicine men." The medicine man converted himself into a combination of a jaguar-rat. The warriors, who accompanied him, brought arrows and joined those of Ujarrás. The great medicine man who appeared as a rat had his companions from Talamanca carry him in a cage over the cordillera. The people from Ujarrás met him and all went well armed, including females.

They met the Changuinas who had joined with the inhabitants of Cabagra (Bribri) on the other side of Buenos Aires[154] and had a terrific battle. The medicine man from Cabécar was more powerful than the one from Changuina, however, and the Cabécares kept winning.

[712] The wounded Changuinas and Cabagras (Bribri) went into a large underground house made of cut stone which served as a fort. The enemy followed them and made them march ahead while another encounter with the Changuinas and Cabagras was prepared.

The medicine man from Talamanca went ahead of everyone and his enemies allowed him to sit down. He sat on a wooden bench which immediately broke, so he sat on a stone one which did the same. The medicine man of the Changuinas seeing this grew afraid. He withdrew into the underground fortress. There was a saw which the Changuinas and Cabagras used to cut off heads of the people from Talamanca and Ujarrás. Then they gathered the blood and drank it calling it cacao. The medicine man of the Changuinas wanted to cut off his Talamancan colleague's head but he was not powerful enough.

It was then that the warriors from Talamanca and Ujarrás moved in. Seeing their medicine man seated on sticks and stones instead of a gold seat, such as the Changuinas had, they proceeded with such fury that the enemy became frightened. The Changuina's medicine man grabbed a gold seat in the shape of a horse and through magical means made it fly with him through a door which was in the center of the large building.

[153] Cabécar, in Talamanca, is still the "seat of learning" for medicine men. (*See* Medicine Man.)

[154] I.e., south of Buenos Aires, above where the

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P. 49(B)] SA 19 Talamanca SA 19
Cabécar
Bribri
Changuena

173 726 The Talamancan medicine man also used his magical skill and flew in pursuit. The Changuina, however, realizing that the other was going to catch him, came down from his great height and fell into the Laguna of Sierpe.[185] His enemy, being more powerful, bewitched him forcing him to remain there forever with his golden horse. Then the victor returned to lead his men in battle and to receive the surrender of the Changuinas and the Cabagras.

As they knew what the outcome of the fight would be, they hid and closed up tightly the golden treasure before it could be captured. [103] The place they chose is known today as the *Tapón de Platanares* at the summit or headwaters of the Changuina River.

Historic Events.

The History of San José Cabécar

(*Cabécar*)

173 776 [103] [14] *sibubetá*, part of Cabécar, lies in the upper Coen. The name means Hill of God because *sibu* lived there. He wore a feathered headdress and a loincloth. The same place was inhabited by the *usegLa*, *túgwa*, and *tigibí* clans. The *usegLa* visited *sibu* in a nice house one day. He was smoking.

173 The Spaniards came and after they had been there awhile, the people spent two evenings sharpening the knives the Spaniards had taught them to use. The first time the Spaniards asked why. The reply was, "We are going to work early in the morning." The Spaniards did not tie up the Indians then because they behaved so well. Five days later, the Indians cut off the heads of the thirty Spaniards. The Indians threw the Spaniards in a swamp, deep in the mud. Other Spaniards came and carried 173 776 [103] *sibu* away. This was, of course, because he wanted to be carried off. The Spaniards called *sibu* San José. That is why Cabécar is known as San José Cabécar. They took *sibu* to Orosi where he is today and only leaves to visit his sister in *sibubetá*. She cannot be seen.

Changuina River meets the Diquís.

[185] Associated with one of the seven mouths of the Diquís River.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962

[P. 50(A)]

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Cabecar
Bribri

Dispersal

(*Cabécar*)

173 648 The medicine men recount that the Spaniards seized their people and sent them to Ujarrás and to San José.[156] They were hunted with dogs who picked up their scent. The Cabécares hid in the forests and killed the Spaniards and the dogs with arrows. This annoyed the Spaniards and they put armor on some of the dogs. Sick at heart, the Cabécares went to a waterfall and with the aid of a ladder, climbed up so the dogs couldn't smell them. The Indians then fled to different parts.

Sacrifice to a King

(*Bribri*)

173 597 [714] The last Bribri king adopted a young Térraba (*broshi*) boy and brought him up. He was so very brave that he did not need a shield [157] to protect him from lances when in battle. He fought for and defended the Bribri as if he were one of them, alone setting fire to enemy roofs. The sad fact, however, was that he was not a Bribri but a captured boy. When the king died, even though the young Térraba cried as if he had lost his own father, the Bribri killed him and he fell on top of the king's body.

The End of the *usegLa* and the King

(*Cabécar and Bribri*)

173 793 643 Neither the *usegLa* nor the King were good to the people. If someone laughed in front of the *usegLa*, his mouth became fixed in that position. If he looked in a way the *usegLa* did not like, his eyes were closed permanently. The King took the bravest men and tied them to posts and beat them with knives made of *pejibaye*.

The people did not like this and fled from

[156] This is not exactly true. The Costa Rican government forcibly brought Cabécares to Tucurrique and Orosi as punishment for uprisings in Talamanca. *See* Fernández, 1883, vol. III, ftn. 10, and section of History in this paper.

173 Talamanca. This upset the medicine men.
793 They decided to protect the people and they
643 bewitched the *usegLa* and the King. That is
[754] why there are none today.

The Foundation of Cabagra

(*Bribri*)

173 The ancient Borucas made the original trail.
166 Over this came *teka*, the first man who came
643 to live in Cabagra. He left Talamanca because of King *Berchí* [188] who took delight in severely castigating the medicine men and ordering all the people of the tribe. *Berchí* was a member of the *sáLwak* [189] clan, so-called because he had a monkey's tail, and anyone who laughed at him he had beaten.

173 *teka* brought his whole family along to
166 Cabagra but they did not want to stay. He returned them to Talamanca and came back all alone. This trip took eight days. He was

173 not baptized, but later he was and received
997 the name of Ciriaco. We do not know his family name. More people followed him and settled in Cabagra because of King *Berchí*'s cruelty.

A bishop came and rebaptized the population. Then he crossed the range to Talamanca accompanied by Térrabas, Borucas, and Cabagras.

The Last Kings of Talamanca

(*Bribri*)
(*Recounted in the plain.*)

173 Santiago Umaña belonged to the *kumbum-*
643 *wak* clan. He was the last king of Talamanca and wore a gold hummingbird called *batzán* in Bribri. He sold Talamanca to foreigners for money and went to England to receive it. He sold the children of our people.

Berchí was another king. He was the one who tied the best men to a tree and beat them to punish them. *Berchí* belonged to the *sáLwak* clan. He killed Santiago.

[597]
[714]

[187] Some Indians say turtle shell.
[188] *See* Appendix III: Antonio Saldaña.
[189] *sáL* is "monkey." *wak* is "race" or "seed" or "clan."

dance which was performed in a circle by men and women with one person singing but the whole group joining in the chorus. The song recounted the experiences during a hunt.

There are various dances held in connection with death and burial but they are seldom seen today outside of upper Talamanca.

Pittier[308] mentions a bone dance performed at the time of secondary burial by men if the deceased was an adult and by women if a child. The bone dance witnessed by the writer was carried out by a line of women and one of men. The person taking the place of the Singer (*see* Death) chanted the life history of the departed, and kept time with a gourd rattle. His four assistants in the line of men had drums under their arms which they beat as they danced.

A different bone dance which is a remnant of a war dance with trophy heads is occasionally performed when the medicine man is feeling particularly sure of himself and wants to celebrate. Men and women form a circle with interlocked arms. It is said that skulls were once balanced on the arms. Today, nothing is placed there. The men sing and the women join in the chorus singing *ékéké* meaning "good" or "well."

Songs. All sacred songs are basically Cabécar even though they may be sung in Bribri. The Medicine Man and sometimes the Burier sing these songs which are usually in ancient Cabécar and are not understood by the masses.

Lay songs are common to the Bribri and very rare among the Cabécar. The Bribri delight in inventing songs to fit the occasion. Both men and women like to sing and do so on the slightest provocation when working, bathing, washing, or minding the baby. The addition of words only for their sound is characteristic. Likewise, many Térraba words are found in Bribri songs, the meaning of which is unknown to the singer. In fact, the sung language permits all sorts of liberties as well as having a certain vocabulary of its own.

western Panama. The traditional home of the Bribri is in northwest Panama. *See* Stone, 1952, p. 252.

[308] Segurra y Julia, 1907, pp. 594–95.

[308] Pittier, 1938, pp. 25–26.